DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 266 UD 018 590

AUTHOR Naidoo, Josephine C.
TITLE Assertiveness Training and Cross-Cultural Perspectives: South Asian Women in Canada.
PUB DATE Jun 78
NOTE 50p.; Paper presented at the Canadian Psychological Association Annual Meeting (Institute on Women, June, 1978); Not available in hard copy due to reproduction quality of the original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Aspiration; *Acculturation; Assertiveness; *Cross Cultural Studies; Cultural Factors; Cultural Pluralism; Family Role; *Females; *Indians; Occupational Aspiration; Religious Factors; Role Perception; Self Concept; Social Development; Socialization; *Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS *Canada (Ontario); Canadians; *South Asian Canadians

ABSTRACT

Presented in this document is a cross-cultural study dealing with the role of socialization, self perceptions, and achievement orientation of South Asian and Anglo Saxon women living in Ontario, Canada. These dimensions are explored within the context of selected cultural, religious, and philosophical variables prevailing in the two cultures. Some of the factors examined and compared include male-female relationships, family orientation, self concept, selected religious values, sense of accomplishment, and achievement aspirations. These factors are further examined in the context of adolescent role and achievement socialization. Reflections of the respondents on particular questions provide cross-cultural perspectives on such issues as the assertiveness in women, the realization of potential, and contribution to the larger society. Insight is provided into the acculturation of a non-western subgroup into the cultural pluralism which characterizes Canadian society. Tables illustrating data collected and a list of references are included. (Author/EB)

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AUG 2 1 1978

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Assertiveness Training and Cross-Cultural Perspectives: South Asian Women in Canada

Josephine C. Naidoo
Wilfrid Laurier University

Presented at the Canadian Psychological Association Annual Meeting: Institute on Women, June, 1978

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Assertiveness Training and Cross-Cultural Perspectives:

South Asian[1] Women in Canada

Josephine C. Naidoo

Wilfrid Laurier University

I. Introduction

Empirical research on peoples of non-western origin living on the North American Continent has emerged only in recent years. The literature reveals that research on the South Asian culture is generally meagre. Comparative studies of this culture and the North American are scattered.

The present study comprised an exploratory, in-depth, cross-cultural survey of the role socialization, self-perceptions, and achievement orientation of women respondents drawn from two cultural populations of widely different origins resident in Ontario, viz., South Asian and Anglo Saxon. The dimensions of interest were explored within the context of selected cultural, religious, and philosophical variables prevailing in the two cultures. The study contributes to emerging research on people of South Asian origins in North America as follows:

(i) It provides data about the influence of cultural habits on concepts of male-female roles and functions; data useful for the assessment of attitudes towards women based on concepts of biological determinisn which tend to undermine the potential achievement-orientation of North American women.

(ii) It examines the relationship between adolescent socialization & achievement aspirations for the two cultures.

(iii) Finally, the study gives insight into the dynamics of acculturation

in a non-western subgroup within the context of the cultural pluralism characterizing Canadian society.

At this critical point in the history of Canadian unity, the fullest participation and active commitment of all segments of the population to Canada, Canadian institutions, Canadian society and culture, is an issue of urgent dimensions. Such commitment poses complex questions for new Canadians. These revolve around the dual demand of identification, communication and social acceptance within the host culture, and the retention of those facets of the original culture perceived as critical for cultural identity and integrity of the inner self-concept.

In traditional Indian thinking, the ideal woman was selfless, gentle, devoted, retiring, loyal, obedient -- characteristics symbolized in the figure of Sita,[2] devoted wife of Rama, and acted out in extreme acts of loyalty as embodied in the ancient practice of "suttee".[3] However, naturalistic observations indicate that the contemporary South Asian woman has experienced change and acculturation both to forces within India and in the western world.

The most in-depth sources of data inquiring into these changes in women within India derive from studies by Margaret Cormack (1961, 1964) and a scattering of more recent studies (Jacobson, 1976; Srinivas, 1977). Studies of South Asian women who have emigrated from India to many parts of the world are meagre, scattered and lacking in empirical data (David, 1964; Uberoi, 1964). The best known writings on South Asians in the Republic of South Africa are those of sociologist, Fatima Meer (1969).

Overall, review of the literature revealed a general lack of empirical studies on women of non-western origin living on the North

American continent. The status of the literature in this area of research interest presented this investigator with obvious problems.

The present paper: 1. Examines the self concept, selected religious values, sense of accomplishment, and achievement aspirations, [illegible] large sample of women (N = 105) of South Asian origins resident in two adjunct cities[3] in Ontario, Canada. These data are further examined in the context of adolescent role and achievement socialization.

2. Makes comparative analysis on similar dimensions for a sample of women of Anglo-Saxon origins, matched by residential location. (N = 105)

3. Poses questions and reflections about the South Asian woman in Canadian context, and attempts to provide some cross-cultural perspective on the wider problem of assertiveness in women, the realization of potential, and contribution to the larger society.

II. Characteristics of the Samples

210 volunteer respondents of South Asian and Anglo-Saxon origins were interviewed by trained senior Canadian women students in two detailed sessions conducted in the women's home settings. An in-depth interview schedule probing the variables of interest to this study drawn from the literature and modified for research pertinent to the Indian culture, in particular, was utilized. The study was viewed as exploratory, its basic objectives being to identify and refine variables yielding insightful knowledge, again in particular, about the South Asian culture.

Since official population records by ethnic background are not available in Canada, population estimates for the South Asian group resident in the twin cities were based on listings provided courtesy of local cultural and religious organizations and well-informed individuals within

the South Asian community. A randomly selected sample of 10% from each subgroup within the Indian community was set as a target sample.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Table 1 indicates that this "target" sample requirement was largely met. Women from India, Pakistan, Bangledesh, Sri Lanka, East Africa, Guyana and Trinidad were, therefore, included in the "target" sample. Table 2 identifies the religious affiliation of the respondents, a very salient dimension in their value system and outlook on the world.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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Respondents of Anglo-Saxon origins were randomly selected from the City Directory (Vernon, 1976) on the basis of residential "match" with the South Asian women.

Detailed biographical data were obtained from the respondents. Selected data are presented in Table 3.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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The data reveal good "match" between participants in the two groups on demographic variables which investigators employing the survey technique

generally attempt to control. Thus, both South Asian and Anglo-Saxon women had spent most of their childhood and adolescence within their respective home countries, primarily in cities and towns (rather than metropoles or rural areas), most women in both groups were relatively young, in the 20-34 year-old age bracket, husbands were older than their wives, and most women in both groups had been married 1-5 years. The Anglo-Saxon group peaked at one other age level, 50 years +, married 20 years +.

Primary and high school education were most frequently received by women in both groups. There was a nucleus of women with higher degrees (Bachelor's degree, in particular) among South Asians and Anglo-Saxons; there were more respondents with post graduate degrees in the South Asian group. There was a higher frequency of clerical-professional training among the Anglo-Saxon women. Husbands in both groups tended to have received more formal education than their women, with a nucleus of men possessing higher degrees for both groups. Respondents' parents had roughly the same educational background. Mothers and fathers generally had attended primary and high schools; a small number of fathers in both groups had obtained the Bachelor's degree. There were more cases of skilled laborours among the fathers of the Anglo-Saxon group.

Respondents in both groups were, in general, "non-students", the salary bracket, $15,000-$20,000 was most frequently endorsed by both groups where a response to this item had been given. However, there were twice as many Anglo-Saxon couples in the $30,000 + bracket. Husbands were main wage earners in both groups, women who worked contributed just small percentages of the total income. There was, however, a small group of women (5.7% for South Asian; 5.8% for Anglo-Saxons) who, seemingly, were sole earners in each group respectively.

South Asians most frequently had a two-child family; Anglo-Saxons three. South Asians were primarily Hindu by religion; Anglo-Saxons were primarily Protestant.

The South Asian length of stay in Canada was very variable, ranging from 1-16 years, peaking at 2-3 years. Most South Asians were landed immigrants, and most planned to become Canadian citizens.

III Comparative features of the samples

[A] Self-identity and role perceptions

Insight into the women's self-concept and self-identity was gleaned from a series of measures which probed responses to questions such as: Who am I? How do I view my real self? What would I like to be ideally? What attitudes do I have toward myself? (Naidoo, 1977)

Pertinent data from the "Who am I?" (Kuhn and McPartland, 1954) measure is reported in this paper and presented in Table 4. When confront-

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Insert Table 4 about here

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ed with the question, "Who am I", respondents initial reactions were uncertain, reticent, expressions of "being at a loss" to verbalize their insights about the inner self were quite commonly encountered. Most respondents seemingly seldom reflected on this question, possibly because of immediate environmental demands on them, or because they are culturally not "tuned" to probing the self and the meaning of their lives. Seemingly, South Asian women incorporate life events as they occur, adjust and "flow" with these events. However, once respondents felt at ease, they responded more readily, and even with enthusiasm. Overall, descriptions were simple, concrete, and straight forward. A content analysis of the responses (N =

104) reveals the pattern described below: To the cue phrase, "I have", primary focus centred on the family (I have small children, good children, a good understanding husband, a happy life in the family); there was only negligible focus on material possessions.

To the cue phrase, "I am", responses revolved about the home and family (I am a wife, mother, good wife and mother), on the self as "woman", on personality traits possessed, balanced between desirable and undesirable traits (I am kind, nice, sincere, unselfish, intelligent, happy, versus I am impatient, get annoyed, like to gossip, have a bad memory) and frequent mention was made of skills, training, education, professions (I am a teacher, artist, nurse, doctor, typist, etc.) To the cue phrase, "I want", three major emphases emerge: (i) a good education, success, high achievement for children, (ii) realization of the woman's potential, more knowledge, education, (iii) a happy life, peace, contentment for family and self and (iv) a concern about others, "helping" activities.

To the cue phrase, "My goals are", the following responses were elicited: (i) further education, learning English, careers, e.g., teaching, social work, (ii) a happy life, being a good wife and mother, (iii) helping others, serving the community, doing volunteer work, doing something for the world and the poor, making a good impact on Canadians, embodied in statements such as: prove I'm a Canadian, remove discrimination, share old civilization of India, show Indians are not underdeveloped, understand ethnic groups in Canada.

A similar theme emerged in response to the cue phrase: "I would like to (be)", i.e., (i) the family oriented theme, (ii) service to others and (iii) self-improvement, career aspirations.

Several "mentions" were made about religious values and the

importance of these values for children ("I have devotion to God", "show Canadians that because of Karma we are all here"). There were a few "mentions" of wanting to return to India.

Cursory inspection of the "Who am I" data for the Anglo Saxon sample indicates, perhaps not surprisingly, that these respondents perceive their self identity in much the same way as the South Asian respondents. The "family-centredness", "family education" is a repetitive theme. Three somewhat more marked foci that emerge as different from Indian responses are: (i) more emphasis on personal recognition (I want more respect, freedom, education, recognition, to be more assertive), (ii) a clearer identification on justice for women (I want a feminist community, greater justice for women, to remain single), and (iii) a focus on personal growth (My goals are to be important, self-confident, fulfill desire for success).

Analysis and Reflections: Two basic themes emerge from the self-identity sentence completion test for the South Asian sample, a strong family orientedness, and a concern about education for the woman herself and her family.

Responses on a measure of beliefs about role division in the home, male dominance, responsibility for children and household chores, and women's education and work outside the home, yielded much the same picture. The South Asian woman is strongly "traditional" with regard to motherhood and children, but she is quite "contemporary" with regard to education and careers outside the home. However, she is both more traditional on motherhood-children issues, and less contemporary on education-career issues, than her Anglo-Saxon counterpart.

[B] Adolescent Sex Role Socialization

An exhaustive survey of the respondents' sex role socialization during adolescence was made. Questions pertaining to interpersonal

relationships within the family, discipline, modelling, and interaction with parents were included in the survey.

South Asian respondents perceived many dimensions of similarity for boys and girls. For example, boys and girls were expected to be equally loyal to family, obedient to family, concerned about others, boys and girls experienced equal decision-making by parents.

It was in the domain of protection, control of emotions, responsibility for actions, freedom to move outside the house unaccompanied and for "doing your duty" that South Asian respondents reported clear differences. These differences also emerged as significantly different from the socialization experiences of the Anglo-Saxon sample as Table 5 indicates.

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Insert Table 5 about here

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As is generally known this pattern is similar to that of other traditionally oriented immigrant cultures and is bound up with the important place of virginity, being "good" and "moral". As with other traditional cultures, the honour of one's daughters is linked to family honour. A child is essentially a member of a large family unit and every honour and dishonour extends to this unit, to a total family honour.

To the question "what did 'being a girl' mean to you during adolescence?", most respondents singled out the restriction on their movements outside the home. On the whole, no resentment about this was expressed; only one respondent said: "Being born a girl is hell! Terrible to be a girl!".

On the whole the negative aspects of the restrictions that the girls experienced were balanced by a feeling of being "special", "loved by

people", "getting attention", some respondents said: "I was pleased to be a girl". These warm, close, happy relationships within the family are reflected in the data given in Table 5. South Asians perceived warmer family relationships than the Anglo-Saxon sample. They felt a part of the family circle rather than as individuals, they felt secure, parents were attentive, and mother was very satisfied with her role. Most South Asian respondents were raised with domestic help in the home, in contrast to Anglo-Saxon respondents. The South Asians, therefore, came from homes in which women were largely freed from the heavier domestic role that, until the advent of labor saving devices, characterized a large part of the women's role in North American culture.

[B] Achievement Aspirations: As is commonly recognized in Protestant societies, hard work and the pursuit of success became moral ideals and many analysts, contend that these moral ideals led to the economic accomplishments of the Protestant societies. Given this hard work-success oriented climate, why is it that the female sector of North American society is besieged by a condition described and documented by American psychologist, Matina Horner (1975), as "fear of success"? i.e., why is it that girls in North American society experience anxiety about achieving because they expect unfavourable consequences arising from success, such as: fear of losing friends, not finding a marriage partner, fear of becoming lonely, isolated, unhappy, because of success.

Horner used a story telling imagery technique to elicit achievement responses from American female college students. Her content analyses of these data revealed that even girls who were competing successfully at college, displayed fear of social rejection, concern about their femininity/normality and indeed their stories revealed denial of success.

In general, coverage of achievement motivation in women is limited; even less research has been conducted on cross-cultural samples. To this writer's knowledge, no empirical research has been conducted on achievement aspirations in cultures, such as the South Asian, where there is no dating system, where every girl's marriage is almost assured because part of her father's duty is to find a spouse for her, where romantic love is not a major component of marital expectation, and where marriage is often by parental arrangement (present South Asian sample: marriage by arrangement 46.7%; by own choice, "love marriage" 41.0%), i.e., where many experiences likely to generate anxiety and fear, as identified by Horner, are not a significant aspect of the culture.

The present study utilized Horner's story-telling method to probe the nature of achievement motivation in South Asian and Anglo-Saxon women. Participants were asked to tell a story about the following situation: After first term finals, Anne finds herself at the top of her medical school class. The themes in the stories were analyzed using Horner's categories.

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Insert Table 6 about here

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Table 6 reveals that for South Asian respondents there was negligible occurrence of anxiety connected with the expectation of success. Respondent story imagery did not reflect feelings that success would result in social rejection or loss of femininity/normality. Rather, success was viewed as bringing happiness to the individual involved, as well as to her family, a bright and continued career is predicted, and potential contributions to the society are envisioned. Indeed, many South Asian stories had a "fairytale" tone to them: "Anne will become a doctor, and everyone will be happy ever

after".

Stories by Anglo-Saxon women were more complex, especially with regard to analyses of the anxieties likely to be experienced by Anne. Table 6 shows clearly that while the "happiness-success-continued career" theme of the South Asian stories did emerge in their stories as well, there was a well defined anxiety component based on fear of social rejection of various descriptions.

The story-telling analysis of achievement was augmented with tests of achievement attitudes, aspirations for the women themselves, and for their daughters. In the achievement orientation test (Mehrabian, 1968, 1969) respondents are asked to indicate their preference for one of two settings or experiences. A higher level of achievement orientation is inherent in one of the two choices. Thus, for example, agreement with the following statement indicates high achievement: At school/college I would think more about getting a good grade, than worry about getting a bad grade. Disagreement with the statement, which focuses on worrying about getting a bad grade, indicates low achievement.

Significant differences were found on 12 of the 26 items comprising the test. A similar pattern of significant differences was found even when the data for 20 South Asian respondents with higher academic qualifications than the Anglo Saxon respondents were excluded from the analysis. Table 7 presents the data for the more precisely matched samples.

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Overall, the Indian respondents exhibit a high achievement

orientation. Thus, for example, as Table 7 shows, at school they would focus more on getting a good grade, than worry about getting bad grades; they think of the future rather than the past or present; they think it very important to do a job well, even if this means not getting on with co-workers; they prefer something which is challenging or difficult to something at which they feel confident and relaxed, etc. Further, the respondents claimed that they would take advantage of opportunities for higher education and careers for themselves should openings in the community be made available, and that they would be willing to help in the promotional work entailed. Finally, they indicated that they think "very often or occassionally" about education and careers for their daughters for whom they have high aspirations; most people choosing the doctoral level (31.4% of 50.5% responding), in particular, a medical career (26.7% of 54.3%) for their daughters.

Adolescent Achievement Socialization

An indepth survey of the respondents' achievement socialization during adolescence was made. The South Asians reported that there existed a deep respect for learning and education in their homes -- indeed, the Goddess Saraswati, symbol of learning and knowledge (fine arts) -- is glorified by many. Seemingly, these women were encouraged to model their behaviour on the best educated people in the family, parents encouraged high school performance though rewards, father shared the girls intellectual interests more frequently than mother, but both parents valued higher education for women.

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The one dimension which stands out as a difference in the achievement socialization of boys and girls was on items pertaining to freedom to explore the environment. Adolescent South Asian girls were less encouraged, and more discouraged from exploring their environment. Interestingly, though not yielding significant differences neither South Asian girls nor Anglo Saxon girls had ever experienced "fear of success" because of fear of social rejection, or being unattractive as a marriage partner, i.e., the concept of "fear of success" was unknown to either group.

Analysis and Reflections: Seemingly, the Indian woman at the present time has negligible anxiety about success and achievement. She wants both for herself and her children, including her daughters. And she possesses the achievement motivation, attitudes, and values, for bringing high achievement and high aspirations to realization. The picture may change as marriage patterns change, as South Asian women experience more aggressive competition, as stereotypes in the mass media, and attitudes within the larger culture regarding achievement for women, infiltrate her domain.

[C] Sense of Accomplishment: American sociologist, Lipman-Blumen (1972) defines three categories of mode of achievement adopted by women in her study of how ideology shapes women's lives: direct, balanced, and vicarious. Women who prefer the direct mode tend to satisfy their achievement needs predominantly through their own efforts; those who choose the balanced mode place an equal weight on their husband's accomplishments and on their own; and those who choose the vicarious mode of fulfill their achievement needs predominantly through the accomplishments of their husbands.

Lipman-Blumen, on the basis of her study on graduate student wives, presents data which indicate that the direct mode of achievement was preferred by one-third of the women who shared a "contemporary"[5] view of

life, whereas it was preferred by only one-sixth of the women with the "traditional"[6] viewpoint of life. As might be expected, 76% of those women with the traditional ideology compared to 54% of those with the contemporary viewpoint adhered to the vicarious mode of achievement. It is interesting to note with reference to this study, that relatively few women seemed to prefer the balanced mode of achievement in which the accomplishments of both husband and wife carry equal weight (16% contemprary, and 7% traditional).

As already discussed, in terms of perceptions of self and roles, the nature of the South Asian responses appears to be dualistic, reflecting a combination of traditional and contemporary characteristics. Following the Lipman-Blumen procedure, questions pertaining to the respondents' sense of accomplishment outside the home were posed. South Asian and Anglo Saxon responses are given in Table 9.

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Insert Table 9 about here

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Most South Asian women choose the vicarious mode of achievement i.e., their sense of accomplishment outside their home is mostly fulfilled by the husband's achievements, but they do express a need to accomplish something on their own. A fair number of respondents chose the balanced mode of achievement, i.e., their sense of accomplishment is fulfilled only when both husband and wife accomplish equally, and a minority chose the direct mode, i.e., they feel fulfilled mostly by their own accomplishments, though they also need to feel that the husband is accomplishing something. Only a few respondents chose the extremely contemporaneous position, i.e., fulfillment completely on the basis of one's own outside activities.

Inspection of Table 9 reveals that the trends for the sense of accomplishment outside the home for Anglo-Saxon women is almost a reversal of the trends for the South Asian data. Anglo Saxon women choose the direct mode of achievement, i.e., for a sizable percentage of this group achievement needs are satisfied largely through the woman's own efforts. About one-third of the sample chose the vicarious mode, which is considerably lower than the figure for South Asians. Interestingly, a higher percentage of the South Asians rather than the Anglo-Saxon group chose the balanced mode of accomplishment.

To appropriate inquiries, significant proportions of the South Asian women say they day-dream about playing another role in life or achieving something more, and they give as major frustrations in their present role, the descriptions "cannot pursue creative activity of my own outside the home", "unable to utilize my education fully". But, in spite of their aspirations and feelings of discontent at not attaining these aspirations, most respondents fulfill their sense of accomplishment in the traditional vicarious mode through the accomplishments of their husbands. Further, most respondents (78.1%) claim they are satisfied with their roles--ranging from mostly in the home (one-third of the sample), part-time work/outside activities (one-third of the sample) or full-time work outside the home (one-third sample).

It would seem, then, that South Asian women would really like a fuller sense of achievement for themselves, but most settle for less, mostly they slip into a vicarious mode of fulfillment through their husbands accomplishments. About one-third of the Anglo-Saxon sample share the Indian experience; two-thirds of that sample, however, experience a more satisfying degree of fulfillment. These individuals fulfill themselves in a more

balanced or direct fashion largely through their own achievements. 84.4% indicate satisfaction with their roles in life. The difference between the two groups on this dimension i.e., satisfaction with roles in life was not significant. Both groups, too, think the balanced mode of life is ideal and encourage this ideal in their daughters; South Asians more so than Anglo Saxons.

Some interesting points of difference between the two groups relates to their perception of women's liberation movements.

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Table 10 shows a pattern at difference extending from adolescence (for "aware" groups) to adulthood, i.e., South Asians tend to view women's movements in the west, and events such as International Women's Year either favorably or unfavorably; Anglo Saxon women are either positive or uncertain in their attitudes. However, while more Anglo Saxon women assert that contemporary views about the place of men and women in society influence them; a significant proportion of the South Asians claim that they are not influenced by such views.

Analysis and Reflections: The traditional role orientation of the South Asian women, already observed in this paper, reappears more pointedly in the sense of accomplishment measure--South Asian women choose the vicarious mode of fulflling their achievement needs. They satisfy these needs largely through the accomplishments of their husbands. They do, however, reveal some underlying disatisfaction with this experience, though at a surface level they claim satisfaction with their role in life. Ideally, they would prefer a more balanced mode of achievement, in which

equal weight can be placed on their own and their husbands' achievements. This level of achievement is attained by just 26.7% of the South Asian sample.

By contrast, Anglo-Saxon women accomplish more through their own efforts, i.e. the direct mode of achievement. They, too, think the balanced mode of achievement is ideal though most have surpassed this level.

[D] Religious and Philosophical Beliefs

Traditionally three concepts of Hindu thought influenced the South Asian woman's life: Karma (fate, future life) or the Will of Allah/God in the case of Muslim/Christian South Asians, Dharma (doing one's duty according to the rules of one's religion), and Varna (doing one's duty according to caste function/social class). The influence of these values are reported in Table 11.

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Insert Table 11 about here

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As Table 11 shows the data revealed that the concepts of Karma and Dharma (& the equivalent concepts for Muslims & Christians) influence South Asian women's lives "strongly or very strongly'; the concept of Varna had "little influence". Deities, saints, prophets, as models for emulation in the women's lives, had a "strong influence" only on a small minority of women.

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Insert Table 11

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For Anglo-Saxon Canadians, too, the Will of God and doing one's duty according to the rules of religion had a strong influence on the lives of the women. As in the case of South Asian women, doing one's duty according

to social class and modelling behaviour on saints and prophets had little influence. Overall, South Asians tended to be somewhat more conservative than the Anglo-Saxons with respect to these concepts.

Women in both groups considered themselves "somewhat religious". Anglo-Saxons said their religious beliefs had changed "somewhat" since adolescence; South Asians said their religious beliefs had not changed at all since living in Canada or other western countries.

In a corollary study more insight into the meaning of Varna for the South Asian Hindu women was obtained. Brahmin origins (highest or most privileged caste in traditional India) are claimed quite commonly by these women. Pride in their origins was expressed but at the same time there was willingness to accept people in other castes, even in marriage where caste still assumes importance in South Asian settings, so long as they were not of Harijan[7] origins ("scheduled" classes of India). The women were quite candid about their emotions and anxieties when they found themselves unexpectedly in the company of harijans in social settings or found themselves in competition with them in academic settings, in particular where special privileges are accorded these people by Indian law. The women clearly thought caste was more important in India. There was also clear recognition on the cognitive level that negative feelings associated with the scheduled classes were irrational and morally wrong, however, the women acknowledge that these feelings are "ingrained" as they put it, and that they overcome such emotions only with extreme difficulty. In academic settings in India, where special privileges are accorded entrants from the scheduled classes by Indian universities, the women reported claims of reverse discrimination as in the United States.

Hinduism is a way of life, formal setting out of values is to be

found in Hindu texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, but in day to day living the implementation of values "comes across" as rather nebulous to Canadians in the larger society.

Inquiries about values that would be perceived as the equivalent of the ten commandments yielded a three-fold system, summarized as: tolerance, respect for all human beings; sharing, giving, being helpful; dharma -- doing one's duty -- elaborated to explain that ultimate perfection is self denial of all desire, leading to the experience of perfect satisfaction. These values the women attempt to internalize in their children through modelling and use of parables.

The women felt that while they tend to forget the basic terms for many of their religious - philosophical concepts in the Canadian context, the meaning of these concepts are still very clear to them.

In terms of external symbols of religious values, the women reported that many people maintain shrines in their homes in Canada - sometimes small, sometimes sizeable such as a walk-in closet, usually viewed as areas of private worship. South Asians do perform puja/prayer ceremonies in Canadian settings, some in traditional format; some in more contemporary format, e.g., the initiating of talks on aspects of religious values to which friends are invited when, for instance, people move into a new home. Temples that are being constructed on the North American continent serve religious and cultural needs. People find that a cultural centre is more acceptable in the Canadian context and they are responding to this perception. One South Asian lady said: "South Asians are adaptable, tolerant, they moderate their religion to the situation --- God is everywhere --- one does not need a high steeple".

Dietary rules pertaining to abstention from meat and meat products

--- traditionally viewed as raising one to a purer spiritual state --- are modified by many in the Canadian context. Some women reported that on coming to Canada they moved to a meat diet to compromise with husband, children, and friends eating habits; others reported experiencing extreme abhorance and nausea at touching and preparing meat as a consequence husbands had changed to vegetarianism.

Analysis and Reflections

Inherent in the several religions followed by South Asians are spiritual and philosophical values that provide these people with a rich and complex inner life, and provide them with a set of values that stress the "human" aspect of relationships. Sharing with the women in the dialogue on spiritual, values, religious, philosophical and relational was a most rewarding experience for the interviewers in this project; the wealth of such a background may yet emerge as a contribution to this society.

[F] The Privacy Factors in the Interview Process

A characteristic of people in the South Asian culture experienced in this study that warrants attention is the extreme privacy with which South Asians regard their attitudes, values, and relationships. Questions, which in the North American culture, investigators would not hesitate to ask and anticipate frank responses, seemingly are considered extremely private in the Indian culture. Thus, for example, questions about family relationships, perceptions about the self, parental treatment of boys and girls, inter-ethnic marriage, the perception of South Asian women by Canadians in the larger society, etc. were more difficult to probe with Indian respondents than with Anglo-Saxon respondents. Contrary to the general finding for the interview process with ethnic samples, Indian participants did not necessarily respond better to their own in-group

interviewers. Presumably, they preferrred talking with "strangers" because this allayed their anxieties regarding possible "leaks" in data they viewed as very private.

Enlisting the co-operation of the community entailed more than the usual steps researchers take in the initial soliciting states of a project. Although most people responded with interest, even enthusiasm to the project, there were individuals, albeit a minority, who expressed fears that such research was "premature", possibly "damaging"[8] to the community. In some instances it was extremely important to convince the husband of the importance and confidentiality of the wife's participation in the project.

Personal contact, allowing respondents to verbalize their fears, moving from an indirect to a more direct approach in eliciting responses, talking about individual anxieties regarding the effects of empirical reseach for the larger community, were approaches that contributed to rapport and co-operation. Mailed questionnaires yielded negligible response. Telephone discussions, obtaining entry to speak about the project at religious and cultural gatherings, explanatory meetings with leaders of sub-groups within the community, served as excellent step-in-the-door techniques. Television and radio presentations on the Indian programs, flyers placed in the Indian grocery stores and cinemas, alerted some people.

No single set of interviewer characteristics can be labelled the appropriate "successful" set for entry into the homes of this particular minority group. Mature, trained, attractive, courteous interviewers were employed throughout the project. Patience, and a "waiting it out" approach helped. Interviewer-respondent relationships that "clicked" yielded productive, enjoyable, even memorable experiences for both participants in the interview process.

In this writer's judgment paper-and-pencil measures and standardized interview schedules tend to yield rather sterile data about South Asians. The more informal observer-participant method used extensively by anthropologists yields more insight into the rich, complex inner life of this group of Canadians. South Asian peoples originate in rich written cultures, but communication among ordinary people is essentially oral. This characteristic should be considered in designing research on South Asians. In addition, the more informal method facilitates entry into this community and creates the much needed rapport more readily.

[G] Control Measures

The social psychologist is always concerned about the authenticity of interviewee's responses to questions that may tend to elicit responses that are socially desirable in the culture, i.e., the tendency to present oneself in favourable light. The data reveal two major trends in the check (Crowne and Marlowe, 1964) for this concern.

(1) judgments that related to the respondent herself were not contaminated by the social desirability tendency i.e. respondents were willing to admit for example, that they gossip at times, feel resentful when they don't get their own way, feel like smashing things on occassion, etc. That is, respondents were willing to admit to private feelings that may not materialize in overt behaviours.

(2) judgments that related to interactions with others, however, seemed to elicit more socially desirable responses, at least from a western perspective. Thus, respondents say they never hesitate to help someone in trouble, they have never disliked someone, they would never go to a movie without paying for it, they are always courteous even to people who are disagreeble etc.

Careful steps had been taken to ensure eliciting valid and reliable responses from respondents. Thus, "filler" items had been inserted at "strategic" points in the several measures, tests of each dimension had been employed to permit cross-validation, the favorable end of scales had been switched, and at periodic intervals a single question was given, in two formats as a check on consistency of response. Given these precautions the question is raised as to whether items under #(2) are culture-bound, i.e., indicative of the social desirability tendency in western culture in which the test had originally been standardized, but not necessarily from the perspective of South Asian culture. Given the South Asian socialization for girls and narrow experience in the real world one cannot overlook that perhaps her responses were made from this perspective, rather from a motive to present herself in favourable light. Thus, for example, since she does not normally handle payment at a movie because she is always escorted by males in her family she may have insufficient experience to judge her level of honesty. Or, since being helpful is a fundamental value in her socialization and she operates primarily in her family environment she may again lack the experience to make accurate judgements of her potential behaviours.

[H] Assertion-Activity-Achievement in South Asian women:

Summary Reflections:

(i) In general, studies of North American women, reveal a significant negative correlation between a traditional mode of socialization and achievement; a significant positive correlation between a contemporary mode of socialization and achievement (Lipman-Blumen, 1972). The literature indicates that these trends may well derive from the historical-cultural dichotomization of the nature of male-femaleness that existed in western

culture until relatively recently (Cormack, 1961, Lipman-Blumen, 1972, Callahan, 1971). One theoretical focus of the study was to examine the nature of the relationship between socialization and achievement aspirations in the South Asian sample. Given the constraints that only a limited literature on middle class South Asian women is available, there nevertheless exists some support for the exploratory assertion that a complementary view of the nature of male-femaleness (even if rather confused and ill-defined) prevails in the South Asian (Hindu) culture (Cormack, 1961 with reference to Vedic writings pre-600 B.C.). The tentative expectation deriving from this assertion is that middle class South Asian women are perhaps freer to model themselves on behaviours that traditionally have been categorized as either "male" or "female" in western culture. Thus, it may be expected that while South Asian women may tend to both experience and retain traditionally feminine behaviours, this traditionalism will not necessarily extend to achievement orientedness, i.e., a traditional mode of socialization and achievement may be independent dimensions in the South Asian (Hindu) culture, rather than correlated dimensions as in western culture. Recognition is given to recent findings that the contemporary western woman is a more androgenous person (Bem, 1975) consequently the future may well point to independence between the dimensions of mode of socialization and achievement for North American women. The present study, in general, did not support this expectation, i.e., while the Anglo Saxon sample emerged as "contemporary" on tests of self and role perception, they tended to score significantly lower on achievement based tests. Further testing is required to establish these findings with more certainty. (ii) If, indeed, traditional socialization and achievement aspirations are independent dimensions for the contemporary South Asian woman, the question

may be raised as to the possible origins of this orientation. Reference to anthropological writings on women in Hindu tradition (Wadley, 1977) offer some insight. These writings, based on analyses of Hindu mythology and religious texts, assert that the female in Hindu ideology presents an essential duality at three levels. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate this conceptualization in simplified form.

A. In Hindu cosmology, all life emerges from a unity between matter ("prakrti" -- the female, nature, undifferentiated component) and spirit ("purusa" --the male, symbolically culture and differentiated code). The male component contributes the hard substance (structure, bones, nerves, etc.), the female component contributes the soft substance (unstructured, flesh, skin, etc.).

At biological conception all human beings partake of matter and spirit, however, since the female component is equated with nature, earth, soil into which man places his seed, designated as more important in the Laws of Manu (sacred text, written about A.D. 200), women partake more of nature.

B. The female component itself comprises an important duality: on the one hand, it comprises the nature-matter-earth-nurturant ("prakrti") component; on the other, it comprises an active-energizing - potentially aggressive component ("śakti") -- the energizing principle of the universe. This principle ("śakti") underlies both creation and divinity and is female; all human beings have their share of śakti (endowed at birth but increased or decreased through later actions). "Śakti", therefore, is embodied in the woman, and is the original Energy of the Universe.

C. Inherent in the woman's dual nature (nurturance and power) is the potential for benevolence and fertility on the one hand; malevolence and

destruction on the other. The ideal for women as wives as set out in the Hindu Law Books (adharma - Śāstras . . . rules of right conduct) is for nature (female) to submit to culture (male), for the female element to transfer control of her sexuality to men . . . this submission is viewed as good. The alternative possibility, i.e., female control over her own sexuality, the emergence of the active element . . . such emergence is viewed as dangerous and destructive, bad. But, whereas, the ideal for the wife is submission to husband, goddesses and mothers have more freedom to control their own sexuality, to permit the active component in their nature to materalize. In Hindu mythology and law books, mother is equated with goddess, not the wife, hence, at least in theory, the structure of wife-mother roles is quite different. (In reality, perhaps a true triumph of the active element is seen more often in the goddess than in real people, though the Hindu mother can be a very powerful individual in her own domain.)

(iii) This writer speculates that the existence of a concept of duality in the female nature - a duality comprising a powerful, active element, albeit ideally submerged, is a "plus" for South Asian women. Inherent in this active element is the potential for achievement, activity, involvement, social action and potential contribution to the larger society.

The image of South Asian women by Canadians more generally tends to be dominated by the nurturant component (Naidoo, 1977) and negative affect is associated with this image. For example, the South Asian woman's commitment to her family while positively perceived on the one hand, tends also to be viewed as subserviance to men; her quiet reserve (a virtue in Hindu culture) again positively perceived at one level, moves to a negative perception of her as aloof, unfriendly, arrogant. Her intelligence is recognized by several respondents but people find it hard to integrate this intelligence

with the traditionalism they observe.

South Asian women themselves understand that their role socialization, despite their high academic training and their achievement aspirations, has not equipped them with skills revolving assertiveness , behavioural and verbal, for coping with North American culture.

This writer believes that there is a need for South Asian men and women to gain a new perspective on a balance between the two elements in Hindu cosmology - nurturant and active. This calls for a re-assessment of many traditional Hindu beliefs and values within the new context of the host country. This re-assessment is being conducted at several levels within South Asian circles (example, conference on "Indians in Toronto", May 1977). There is also some indication [9] that South Asian women in the larger cities are changing more rapidly than their male counterparts with resulting threat to the integrity of the family. It would seem that more study and confrontation with the issues under discussion are urgently called for if this threat is to be averted.

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Footnotes

[1]The "South Asian" label is viewed as an acceptable "umbrella" term to describe the very heterogenous group of people who have their ancestral roots in the Indian subcontinent. It is also viewed as a term that gives this broad brown-skinned group a recognition of personal dignity, at a time of general unfavorable attitudes in sectors of Canadian society.

[2]In the Rāmāyana, one of the most popular religious texts of India found in Sanskrit and most venaculars, Sītā exemplifies the behaviour of the proper Hindu wife, devotedly following her husband into exile for 14 years. Many adventures take place during this period, including the capture of Sita by the evil Lord Ravana, the Kind of Sri Lanka. Sita remains a loyal and virtuous wife throughout these trials. The reunion of Rama and Sita is celebrated throughout India at Diwali, one of India's major festivals.

[3]Hindu practice whereby a widow immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her husband; abolished by the English in 1829.

[4]Cities are unidentified to respect complete anonymity of participants.

[5]The contemporary view is based on the belief that women should be as free as men to pursue educational and occupational goals, that men and women should share equally in responsibilities inside and outside the home. (Lipman-Blumen, 1972)

[6]According to the traditional view the female role revolves about the belief that a women's responsibilities are home-making and child rearing; men are responsible for financial support of family, women with children should not expect to have a career. (Lipman-Blumen, 1972)

[7]"Children of God" the term used by Mahatma Gandhi to describe the "untouchable" castes of India whose social status he strove to uplift.

[8]Words used by potential respondents.

[9]Personal communication, Indian Immigrant Aid Services, Toronto.

Table 1

DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY SAMPLE

Home Country	# Families	10% Sample	Obtained Sample	% Frequency
India	250	25	55	52.4
Pakistan	80	8	12	11.4
Bangledesh	10	1	3	2.9
Sri Lanka	10	1	4	3.8
East Africa	150	15	10*	9.5
Guyana	110	11	12	11.4
Trinidad	75	8	9	8.6
Totals	685	69	105	100.0

*under represented

local South Asian population -- approx. 3,000

Table: 2

SURVEY SAMPLE BY RELIGION

Home Country	Religion	Frequency	Total (N = 105)
INDIA	Hindu	41	
	Sikh	8	
	Muslim	4	
	Christian	3	
	Jain	1	55
PAKISTAN	Christian	7	
	Muslim	5*	12
BANGLEDESH	Muslim	3	3
SRI LANKA	Christian	4	4
EAST AFRICA	Ismaili] Uganda	5*	
	Ithna-Asheri]	3	
	Hindu (Kenya)	1	
	Muslim (Tanzania)	1	10
GUYANA	Hindu	6	
	Muslim	3	
	Christian	3	12
TRINIDAD	Hindu	2	
	Christian	7	9

*under represented

Table: 3

SALIENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (N = 105 South Asians; 105 Anglo-Saxon* Canadians)

VARIABLES		South Asians Frequency	Anglo-Saxons Frequency
Woman's Age:	20-24	24	17
	25-29	23	15
	30-34	24	23
	35-39	20	11
	40-44	7	11
	45-49	6	8
	50+	1	17
Length of Marriage: (years)			
	1-5	33	25
	6-10	22	18
	11-15	25	16
	16-20	9	11
	20 +	10	30
# of Children:	1	18	14
	2	31	20
	3	16	32
	4	5	10
	5+	4	3
Length of stay in Canada (years)	1	10	
	2	13	
	3	16	
	4	7	
	.	.	
	6	14	
	.	.	
	10-16	14	

(*Data missing on many items)

VARIABLES		South Asians Frequency	Anglo-Saxons Frequency
Family Salary:			
	Under $4,999	0	6
	$5,999 -9,999	16	12
	$10,000-14,999	13	11
	$15,000-19,999	20	20
	$20,000-24,999	6	12
	$25,000-29,999	9	6
	$30,000 +	7	15
Woman's Education:			
	Primary School	87	92
	High School	85	90
	Clerical	18	16
	Secretarial	24	18
	Teaching Dipl.	17	14
	Nursing Dipl.	2	8
	B. A. Degree	38	31
	M. A. Degree	18	3
	Medical Degree	1	0
	Ph.D.	1	0

Woman's Religion:	Hindu	46	Rom.Cath.	10	
	Muslim	20	Prot.	74	
	Christ.	22	Jewish	1	
	Other	12	Other	19	
Immigration Status:	Citizen	27			105
	Landed	73			
	Visitor	5			

Table: 4

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOUTH ASIAN "WHO AM I" RESPONSES (N = 104)

Cue Phrase	Most Frequent Responses	Categorization
1. "I have"	small children	family-centred
	good husband	
	car, home	ownership
	music, reading	interests
	sense of humour,	
	education	personal traits
2. "I am"	a wife, mother	family-centred
	a woman	female identity
	nice, happy, impatient	personality traits
	a teacher, typist, student	occupation
3. "I want"	good education for children	family education
	realize own potential	self-achievement
	happy family	family-centred
	car, home, money	material possessions
	to help others	other-oriented
	perfection, truth,	
	peace of mind	spiritual state
4. "My goals are"	further own education	self-improvement
	successful family life	family-centred
	share Indian culture	inter-group relationship
5. "I would like to (be)	good mother, wife	family oriented
	social worker, teacher	career aspirations
	useful, educated, learn	
	skills (English, driving pottery)	self-improvement
	close rich-poor gap,	
	work for broken homes	meaningful service

Table: 5

ADOLESCENT ROLE SOCIALIZATION *

Boys vs Girls

South Asians vs Anglo Saxons

Interpersonal Relationships	Control Discipline	Family Relationships	Parental Interaction	Inner-Self
more protection	more time at home	mostly warm & close to mother	equal attention from parents	mostly felt secure
more respect for elders	less freedom outside home	to father	neither parent frustrated	sometimes felt lonely
equal father's attention	more performance religious duties	to family	father encouraged education	
more mother's attention	more responsibility	mostly happy relations	father shared intellectual interests	
better parental treatment	more control of feelings	mostly felt part of family	both parents valued higher education for women	
different informal activities	more "do your duty"	sometimes preferred extended family		
less assertive				

Mother Role & Life Satisfaction:

very satisfied

Domestic Help in Home:

84%

* Items yielding significant X^2 values
N variable, approx. 105 Indians & 105 Anglo Saxons

Table: 6

ANALYSIS OF STORY THEMES* (NAIDOO-DYBKA, 1977)

Theme	South Asian Stories (N=90) Frequency	Anglo-Saxon Stories (N = 89) Frequency
1. Anne's happiness	32	23
2. Happiness, pride &/or influence of Anne's parents	41	17
3. Continuation of career only	57	37
4. Combination of career and marriage	18	20
5. Career ends after marriage	1	3
6. Poverty in Anne's background	6	0
7. Anne's contribution to society	18	4

ANALYSIS OF STORY THEMES (HORNER'S CATEGORIES, 1975)

	Theme	South Asian Stories Frequency	Anglo-Saxon Stories Frequency
Social Rejection/ Loss Femininity	General social rejection	6	28
	Sacrifice, no dating	0	39
	Conflict female-marriage, career	0	12
	Parental fears re: social rejection	0	2
	Anxiety about future	0	1
Denial	Surprise at results, chance	3	6
	Parental pressure into career	0	4
	Changes career (reality, imagery)	0	2

Table 7

SELECTED ITEMS ON THE MEHRABIAN ACHIEVEMENT SCALE FOR FEMALES (1969)

	South Asian Response	Anglo Saxon Response	p
1. At school/college I would think more about getting a good grade than worry about getting a bad grade.	++*	+	.001
2. I would rather do something at which I feel confident and relaxed than do something which is challenging and difficult.	--*	-+	.002
3. If I am not good at something I would rather keep struggling to master it than move onto something I may be good at.	++*	+	.001
4. I prefer competitive situations in which I have superior ability to those in which everyone involved is about equal in ability.	--*	+	.002
5. I think more of the future than of the present and past.	++*	+	.02
6. I worry more about whether people will praise my work than I do about whether they will criticize it.	++*	+N-	.002
7. If I am ill and must stay home, I use the time to relax and recuperate rather than try to read or work.	--*	-+	.008
8. I would rather cook for a couple of gourmet eaters than for a couple who simply have huge appetites.	++*	-+	.004

Note: (i) South Asians with M.A. degree and above excluded in this analysis to equalize the two cultural groups on the education-achievement dimension.
(ii) + =strong agreement with statement; - = strong disagreement.
(iii) * indicates high achievement orientation.

Table: 8

ADOLESCENT ACHIEVEMENT SOCIALIZATION*

Boys vs Girls

South Asians vs Anglo Saxons

Achievement Orientation	Achievement Aspirations	Achievement Aspirations	Respondents' Goals in Life
higher expectations	parental rewards for efforts often	modelled best educated persons	to train for profession/stable occupation
equal confidence	parental rewards for good school performance	never discouraged from striving for success	
less encouragement to explore environment	parental encouragement to aspire	often imagined becoming famous	
more discouragement from exploring environment	deep respect for learning & education	occassional competition with boys	

*Items yielding significant X^2 values

N variable, approx. 105 South Asians vs 105 Anglo Saxons

Table: 9

SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

My sense of accomplishment outside my home can be:

	Mode	South Asians Frequency	Anglo-Saxons Frequency
1. Completely fulfilled by my husband's work	Vicarious	4	1
	Traditional		
2. Mostly fulfilled by my husband's work but I need to accomplish something of my own		51	32
3. Fulfilled when each accomplishes equally	Balanced	28	19
4. Mostly fulfilled by my own accomplishments but I need to feel my husband is accomplish--ing something	Direct Contemporary	11	36
5. Completely fulfilled by my own accomplishments		3	13
X^2 = 27.350, 4df, p<.001		N = 97	N = 101

Table: 10

TREND IN ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENTS*

ADOLESCENT VIEWS		ADULT VIEWS		VIEWS RE IWY-	
SA	AS	SA	AS	SA	AS
-Positive-		-Positive-		-Positive-	
Uncertain		Uncertain		Uncertain	
-Negative-		-Negative-		-Negative-	

* items yielding significant X^2 values, variable N (44-104)

Question: Influence of Western/contemporary views about the place of men and women in society

	South Asians F	Anglo-Saxons F
very stong	6	7
strong	15	(35)
little influence	26	15
very little influence	22	15
N=	69	74

(X^2 value = 11.124, 3df, $p < .01$)

Table: 11

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS

Influence of Basic Values	Karma Will of Allah/God		Dharma Doing one's duty by religion		Varna Doing one's duty by rules of caste/ social class		Dieties Saints/ Prophets	
	Frequency		Frequency		Frequency		Frequency	
	EI*	AS	EI	AS	EI	AS	EI	AS
very strong	33	18	34	20	9	3	8	3
strong	27	35	32	34	16	23	11	5
little influence	14	17	12	26	15	32	15	17
very little	11	24	9	12	40	33	23	53
X^2 values	10.136, 3df		9.144, 3df		10.412, 3df		13.551, 3df	
P values	<.05		<.05		<.05		<.001	

EI=SOUTH ASIANS (SA)

Figure 1:

HINDU CONCEPT OF FEMALE DUALITY

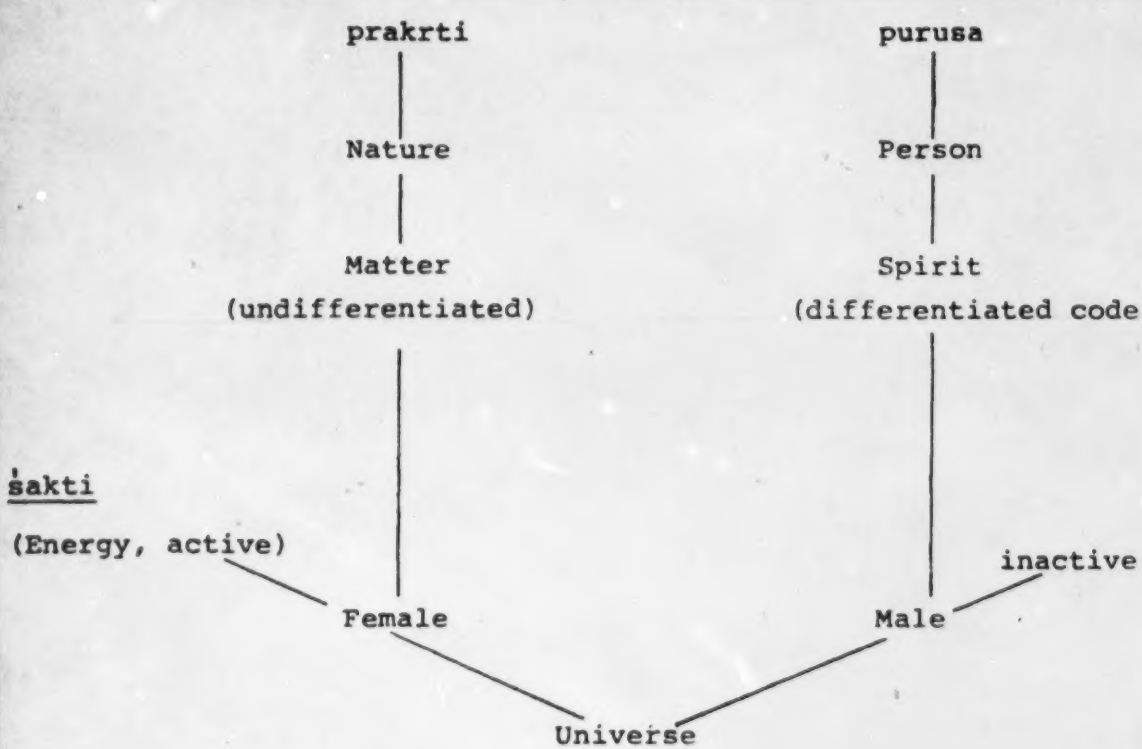

Figure: 2

STRUCTURE OF WOMEN'S ROLES

Wife	Mother
Culture via Male contr...	Nature but in self control
Good	Good/bad
Subordinated	Worshipped

From: Wadley S. S. : Women and the Hindu Tradition. Signs, Vol.3 #1, 1977)